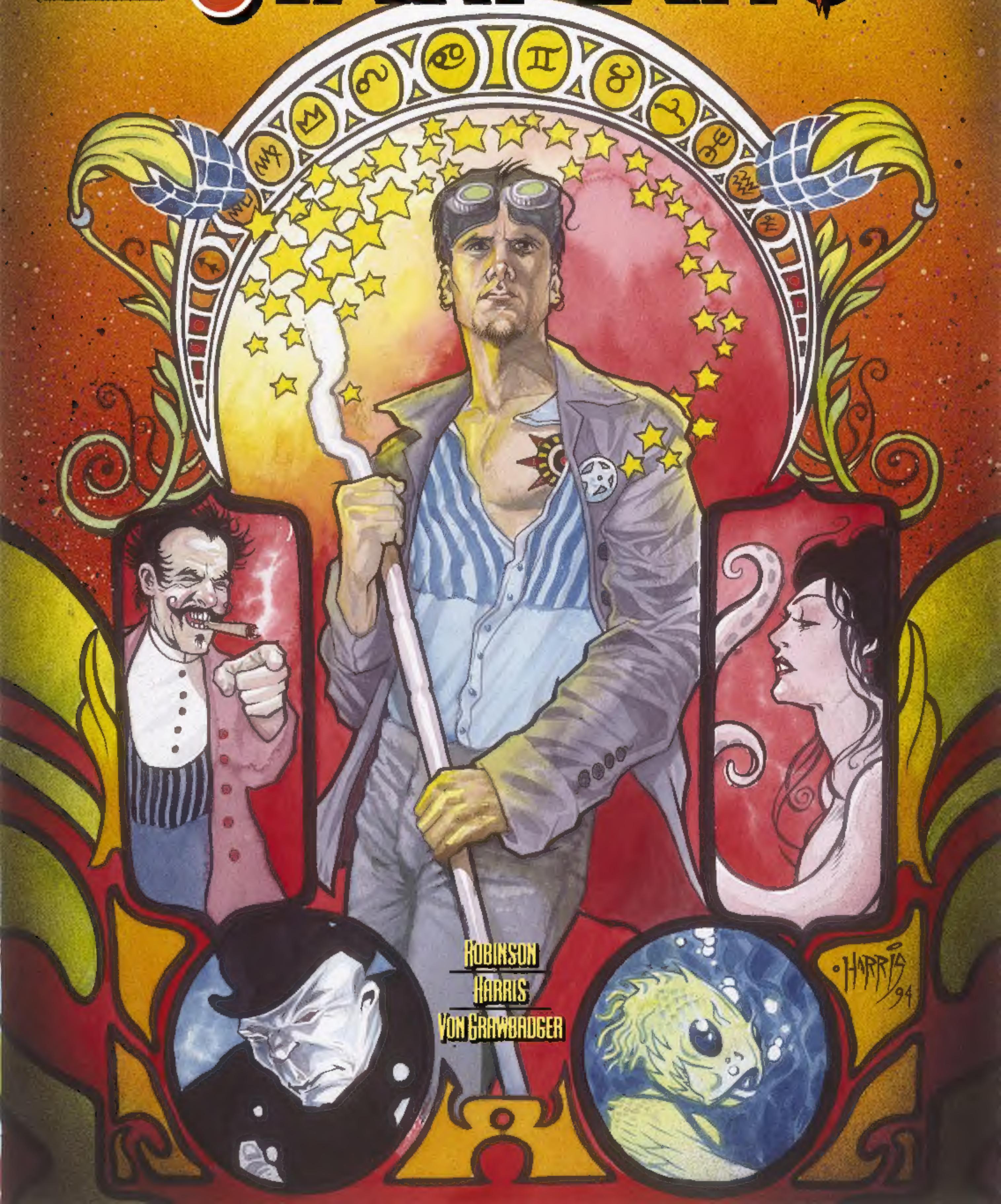




STARMAN

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ROBINSON
HARRIS
VON GRAWBADGER

• HARRIS
94

THERE'S SOMETHING
IN THE SHADE'S
JOURNAL. AN
OBSERVATION.

SOMETHING GLARING
IN ITS OBVIOUSNESS
...NOW THAT IT'S
BEEN POINTED OUT
TO ME...

BUT WHICH WOULD
NEVER HAVE
OCCURRED TO
ME. NOT EVER.

THERE IS OPAL
CITY. THE CITY.
ITS BUILDINGS.

BUT THERE ARE
NO SUBURBS.

THERE'RE THE
MOUNTAINS AND
THE FORESTS TO
THE NORTH. AND
TO THE SOUTH...

...THERE ARE
THE PLAINS.

WITH ALL THE TO-ING
AND FRO-ING I DO,
NOT ONCE DID I
NOTICE THAT, MAN,
I'VE BEEN LIVING IN
THE OPAL FOR WAY,
WAY, WAY TOO LONG.
I GUESS.

YEAH, WEIRD. ONE MINUTE
YOU'RE IN THE CITY...AND
THEN YOU'RE NOT. ZAP, POW.

YOU'RE IN
TURK COUNTY.

WHERE, GOD
HELP ME...

...THE BARGAINS ARE TO BE FOUND.

I AM TORN, TORN LIKE WHEN HALF A DISH CLOTH WILL DO, ABOUT THIS PLACE.

I WAS A FAN OF OL' HOPALONG. BOUGHT EVERYTHING I COULD WHEN I WAS A KID.

AND THERE WAS A LOT TO BUY.

LIKE I SAY, YOU FIND THE COOLEST STUFF HERE.

OUT HERE, EVERY FARMER HAS AN OLD JUKE BOX OR PINBALL MACHINE OR A CRATE OF OLD TIN SIGNS OR A BOX OF COLLIER'S IN THE BASEMENT OR SOMEWHERE.

ONE OLD GUY... HIS SON HAD COLLECTED METAL PEDAL CARS, HAD A BARN FULL OF THEM.

ANOTHER WOMAN... HER HUSBAND HAD DIED OF CANCER THE PRIOR WINTER. HE'D BEEN A NAVY MAN, SERVING IN JAPAN IN THE '60'S. AND WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT... SHE HAD TEN VINTAGE LADIES' KIMONOS TO SHOW FOR IT.

BUT...

THERE'S A WIND THAT WHISPERS ACROSS THESE LANDS. IF IT HAD A COLOR, THAT HUE WOULD BE GRAY-BROWN.

IT'S LOVELY. YEAH, I AGREE.

YOURS FOR FORTY.

TWENTY.

EVEN IN THE SUMMER, IT SEEMS LIKE FALL.

AND FOR EVERY BARN WHERE THE FARMER HAS SOME FIESTA WARE POTTERY OR A HARRY BECKOFF ORIGINAL STASHED, THERE'S A FARMER AND HIS BARN THAT I'D JUST AS SOON NOT, NEVER, NO-HOW ENTER.

AND MY NEPHEW DANNY, HE GOT IT FROM ERNIE.

YOU CAN TELL FROM THE LOOK IN HIS EYES THAT HE'S KILLED IN HIS TIME. AND THAT KILL IS STILL ON HIS LAND.

ERNIE?

ERNIE'S MULE.

ERNIE?

STUBBORN.

MAYBE IT'S THE ISOLATION, THE WINDS.

I CLOSE MY EYES TO BLURRED SLITS AND THE FIELDS BECOME A COPPER SEA. AS THE WIND BLOWS THEM LIGHTLY, SO THE RIPPLES ARE WAVES.

AND EVERY FARM IS AN ISLAND WITH NOTHING IN SIGHT BUT THE SEA AROUND IT.

AND THE SKIES ARE EITHER THE DEEPEST BLUE OR THE DARKEST, BLACKEST BLACK AT NIGHT OR WHEN THE STORMS ROLL IN. I KNOW THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT WOULD BE LOVELY, BUT IT ISN'T.

I HATE THIS STUFF.

FENTON GLASS?

MY MOTHER'S, ALL OF IT. I HATED HER AND I HATE THIS.

IT'S LIKE AN OLD THREE-STRIP TECHNI-COLOR MOVIE THAT, WITH AGE, HAS BECOME MUCH TOO VIVID.

GOT DRUNK AND SHOT UP A BUNCH OF IT.

THIS IS WHAT'S LEFT.

IMAGINE LOOKING UP AND SEEING THAT. EVERY DAY. ANY DAY. MAN, I MIGHT START TAKING A SCYTHE TO FOLKS?

YOU WANT IT? HOW MUCH?

...THE HUSBAND AND WIFE WHO, FROM THE LOOK IN THEIR EYES, HAVE A DARK SECRET SOMEWHERE IN THEIR PASTS. AND MAYBE IT'S STILL BURIED ON THEIR LAND, TOO... OR IN THAT GLOOMY HOUSE OF THEIRS.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR MOM?

SHE'S DEAD...

TAKE IT. GRATIS. I'LL SHOOT THE REST OF IT IF'N IT STAYS AROUND HERE MUCH LONGER.

I SOMETIMES THINK ABOUT THAT PAINTING... AMERICAN GOTHIC BY GRANT WOOD. YOU KNOW...

...MAY SHE BURN IN THE DARKEST PIT OF SATAN'S FLAMES.

THAT'S WHAT I THINK ABOUT WHEN I DRIVE AROUND LOOKING FOR BARGAINS.

BUT LIKE I SAY, THERE'S A FORTUNE TO BE FOUND HERE AT THE SAME TIME.

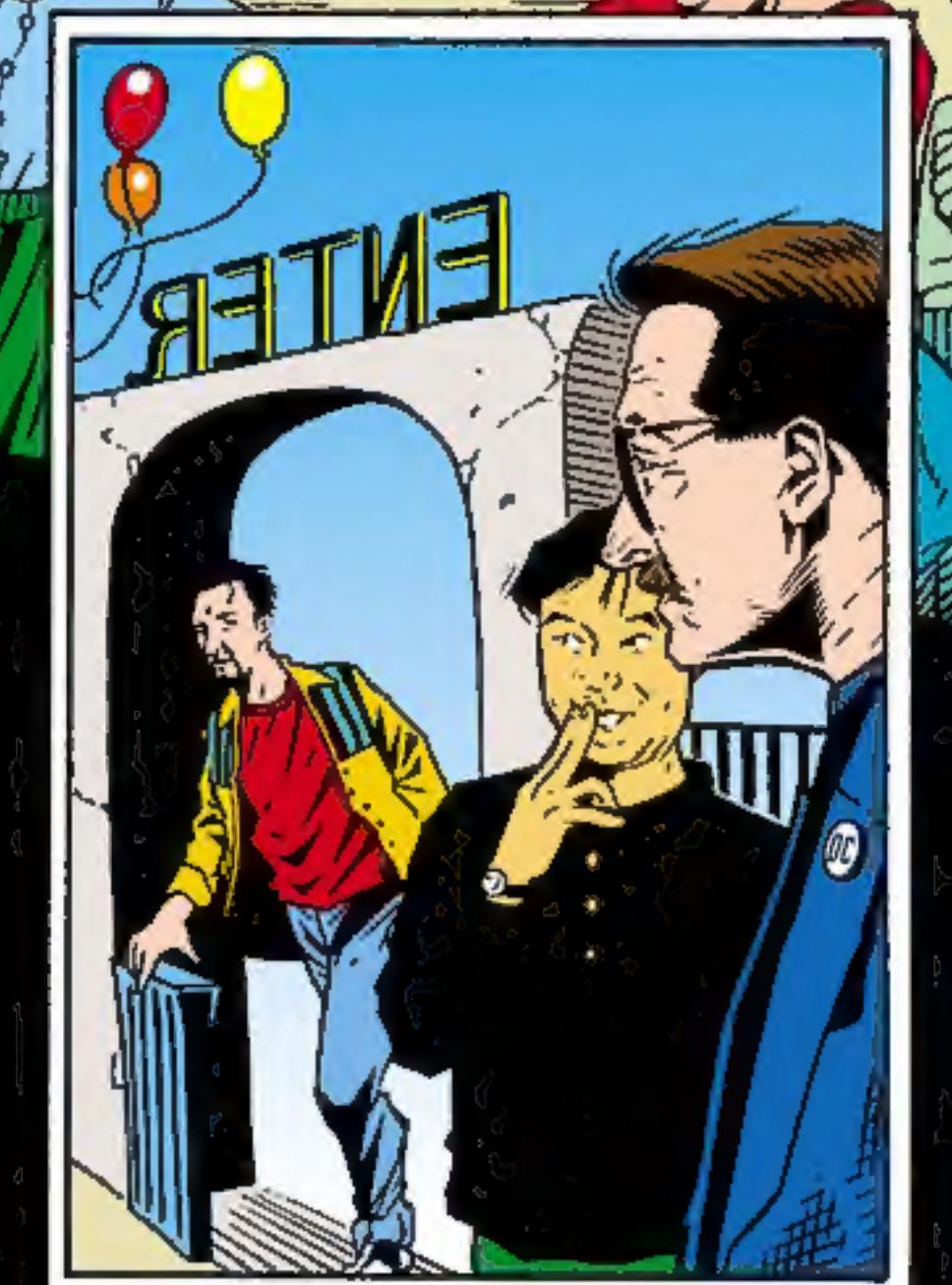
AMERICAN GOTHIC BY WOOD... AND BODIES IN BARNs.

ERR...

ERR...

GOT A BOX I COULD PUT ALL THIS IN?

YOU JUST NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO FIND SOMETHING RARE. SOMETHING...



I WAS SEVEN...SIX OR SEVEN. DAVEY WAS OLDER. AND DAD TOOK US. MOM WAS DEAD BY THEN. YEAH.

THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I STEPPED INSIDE A CIRCUS.



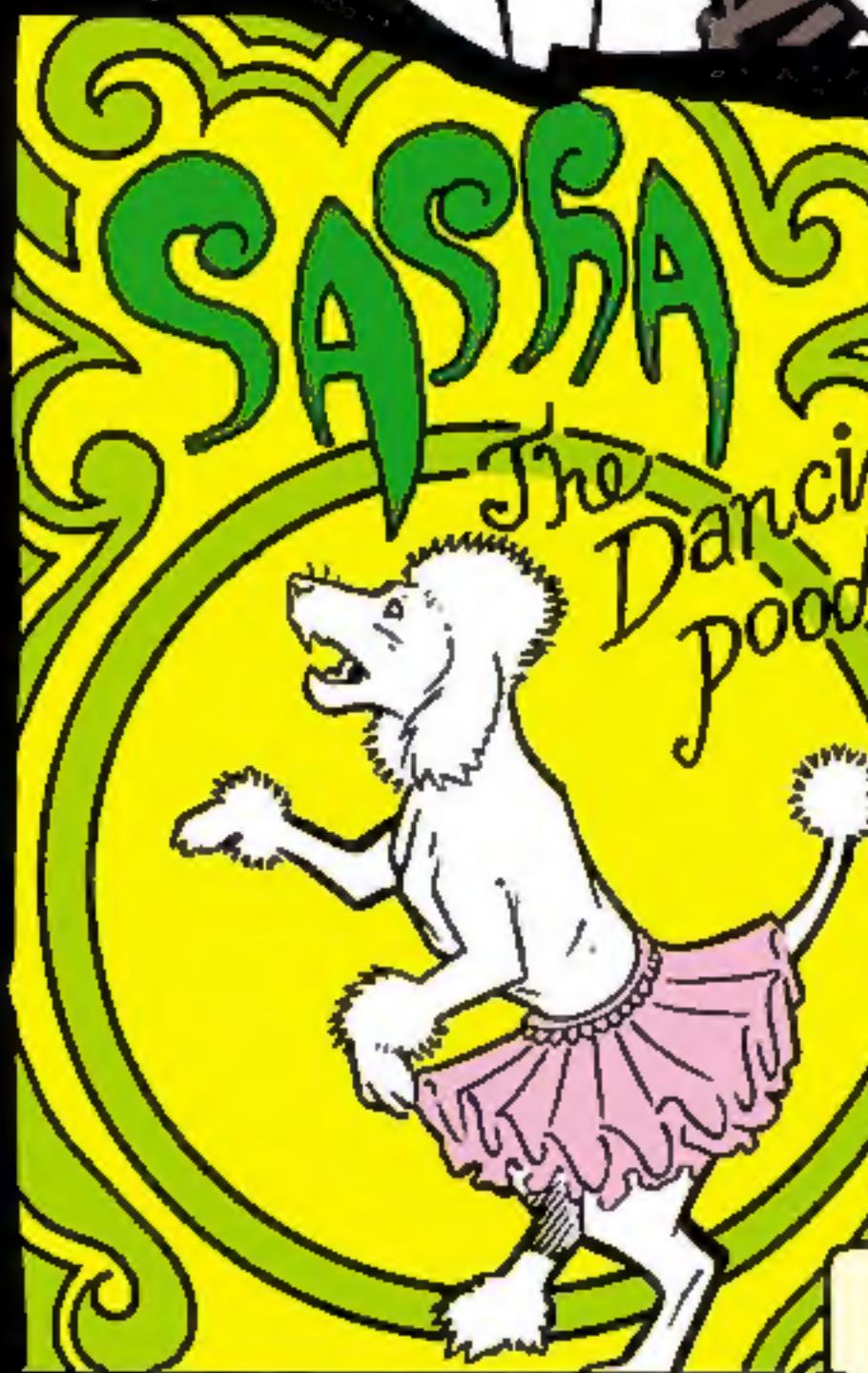
I HAVEN'T BEEN TO ONE...OR THOUGHT ABOUT GOING TO ONE SINCE.

MAN, THEY DON'T SMELL ANY SWEETER THAN I REMEMBER THEM, EITHER. SAWDUST, URINE, ROTTING CANVAS, ANIMALS, PORTABLE TOILET CHEMICALS. THE SWEAT OF THE CROWD AND THOSE WORKING.

COMBINE, FOLDING IN THE EGG WHITES CAREFULLY. ADD TARRAGON AND GARLIC. SEASON TO TASTE AND BAKE FOR THIRTY MINUTES.

GOT YOURSELF A CIRCUS SOUFFLÉ.

YUM.



ME, SUCH A FAN OF TOD BROWNING...AND TIM BURTON...AND "FANTASY ISLAND" RERUNS.

THIS...

...THE FREAK SHOW.

ONE OF US.

ONE OF US.

ONE OF US.

I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THEY HAD THESE ANYMORE.

THIS IS SO COOL.

FINNEGAN
FISH BOY

WONDER WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE GAPEO AT, JUST 'CAUSE YOU'RE DIFFERENT.

I MAY FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH. IN TERMS OF PEOPLE GAWKING AT STUFF, THERE DOESN'T APPEAR TO BE MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LIMBLESS WORM MAN...

...AND A SUPER-HERO. FUNNY HOW--

JACK... KNIGHT...

COSMIC GEEK, HUH? HA!

SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE AFTER MY OWN HEART.



THE SILENCE
WITHIN IS COOL
WATER IN THE
EYES FOR JACK.

EYES THAT SQUINT
FOR A MOMENT
ADJUSTING TO
SHADOW.

JACK PAUSES AS THE
SILENCE WASHES HIS
BRAIN FREE OF THEM
AND THERE, FILLING
IT WITH SHARDS OF
STRANGE VISION.

SMALL THINGS.
FROM JACK'S
HEAD.

--THE MAN WHO DIRECTED
HOUSE OF WAX HAD ONE
EYE. HE COULDN'T SEE THE
FILM'S 3D SEQUENCES
EVEN THOUGH HE'D
DREAMED THEM UP.

--YANOMAMO
WOMEN ARE
VICTIMIZED
FROM CHILD-
HOOD ON.

--DID THE BENDERS
DIE BY THE POSSE'S
HANDS? OR DID OLD
MAN BENDER DIE IN
1884 WHEN HE CUT
OFF HIS OWN FOOT
TO GET OUT OF
THE LEG IRONS?

--LON CHANEY, EDMOND
ROSTAND, PHIL NIEKRO,
SAMUEL DELANY, DEBBIE
REYNOLDS, AND
RACHMANINOFF ALL
SHARE THE SAME
BIRTHDAY.

--"MOCK ON, MOCK
ON, VOLTAIRE,
ROUSSEAU,
MOCK ON, MOCK
ON; 'TIS ALL IN
VAIN--" ... OR SO
SAID WILLIAM
BLAKE.

AND THEN THE
SILENCE BECOMES
MERELY SILENCE.
AND JACK IS
BROUGHT BACK
TO THERE AND
HERE AND NOW.

AND IT'S JUST HIM
AND A BLUE-SKINNED
GENTLEMAN...

...ALONE
TOGETHER
ALONE.



HE...HE
TALKED...
SPOKE...

TOUCHED...

OH...

...MY...

...GOO!

HEAD'S...

...LIKE THE
CAROUSEL
THEY'VE GOT
HERE.

PULSE IS A
BARREL ORGAN.

CAN'T SEE STRAIGHT
... SEE...EVERYTHING
LOOKS--

WHY CAN'T I SEE STRAIGHT?
WHY AM I RUNNING? THIS... ALL
THIS-- WHY AM I RUNNING
FROM IT?

KNIGHT.

SCARED?

WH--

AND WHAT
WAS THAT?
BLUE--

GOTTA GET
OUT... AWAY
FROM--

WHOA,
COWBOY.
WHERE
ARE YOU
RUNNING
TO?

YOUR
NAME
IS...?

KNIGHT.
JACK KNIGHT,
MISTER
BLISS.

I'VE
HEARD
OF YOU,
HAVEN'T
I?

OH, I DOUBT
IT. THERE
ARE LOTS
OF JACKS OUT
THERE. YOU
MAYBE HAVE ME
MIXED UP WITH
SOMEBODY
ELSE.

YEAH,
MAYBE I
DO. SO WHY
DO YOU WANT
TO SEE
ME?

WELL,
TWO
THINGS,
REALLY.

FIRSTLY,
I'M A
DEALER.

I BUY, SELL,
TRADE THE
THINGS
THAT, FOR
ONE
REASON
OR AN-
OTHER...

...PEOPLE
DEEM
COLLECTABLE.
DO YOU
FOLLOW ME?

OH, YES. I'VE
LONG BEEN A
COLLECTOR.

REALLY?

PLAYING
CARDS WITH
NUDE WOMEN
ON THE BACK.
I HAVE
THOUSANDS
OF PACKETS.

GROOVY.
YOU WANT
TO SELL
THEM?

NO.

JUST
ASKING.

LISTEN. WHAT I'M
THINKING IS THAT YOU
MUST HAVE A LOT OF
STUFF THAT YOU
CONSIDER JUNK.
OLD STAGE PROPS.
CURTAINS. MASKS.
COSTUMES.

POSTERS?

YEAH. EXACTLY. POSTER'S. AND IF YOU DIDN'T WANT THEM, I COULD MAYBE MAKE YOU AN OFFER AND TAKE THEM OFF YOUR HANDS.

WELL, I DO HAVE ALL OF THE THINGS YOU MENTIONED. A LOT OF IT'S FROM MY FATHER'S TIME, TOO. THERE'RE PROPS AND POSTERS FROM THE '30 S, '40 S, AND '50 S. I HAVE SOME IN ONE TRAILER AND MORE IN STORAGE IN FLORIDA.

I'VE FOUND THE DAMP IN FLORIDA MEANS ANYTHING STORED THERE DOESN'T AGE TOO WELL. 'SPECIALLY NOT POSTERS AND PAPER. STILL, WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT HERE, I'D LOVE TO LOOK AT.

ALL RIGHT, CRUSHER HERE WILL SHOW YOU.

CRUSHER?

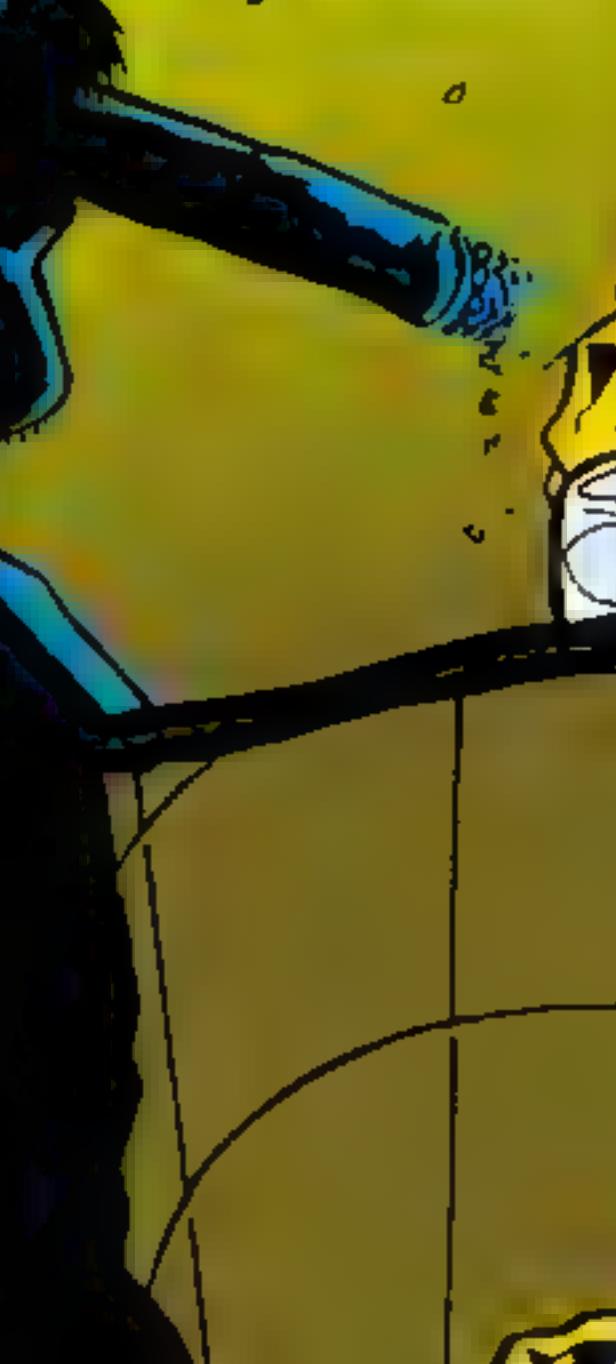
NOW, YOU MENTIONED THERE WERE TWO TOPICS.

ALL RIGHT, HIS REAL NAME'S LYLE.

YEAH...ER... UM... THERE... I SAW A FREAK... THE COSMIC GEEK, YOU BILLED HIM AS.

HE...ERR...TOUCHED ME...I SAW...THIS WILL SOUND CRAZY, BUT I SAW VISIONS OF HIS LIFE, I THINK.

WILD VISIONS. THIS... I HOPE YOU'RE NOT OFFENDED HERE, BUT THE CHAINS ON HIS WRISTS... THEY'RE FAKE, RIGHT? HE'S NOT A... A PRISONER, IS HE? LIKE I SAY, PLEASE DON'T BE OFFENDED. IT'S JUST... WELL, THE LOOK IN HIS EYES AND THE STRANGE LANGUAGE HE MUMBLED WAS--



JACK, YOU'RE
MAKING YOURSELF
UNCOMFORTABLE. THAT
REALLY ISN'T NECESSARY.
THE COSMIC GEEK, AS
WE CALL HIM, IS
ACTUALLY GREG
BAILEY.

COMES FROM
ALBANY. THE
BLUE-DYED SKIN,
THE "ALIEN"
TONGUE, THE
ELECTRICAL PULSE
IN HIS FINGER-
TIPS... THEY'RE
ALL A PART OF
THE ACT.

THE REST...
VISIONS... I CAN
ONLY SUGGEST
WAS YOUR OWN
IMAGINATION.

IT WAS
ALL AN
ACT?

YES. DO YOU THINK THIS
ENTIRE CIRCUS WOULD
STAND FOR SOMEONE
BEING KEPT PRISONER?

LOOK, THE THING THAT
BOthers ME IS THAT
GREG's ACT IS NOW SO
REALISTIC IT ACTUALLY
MANAGED TO UPSET A
PATRON. HE SAID HE WAS
MAKING SOME ADDITIONS
TO IT. I FEAR HE'S ADDED
A LITTLE TOO MUCH.

I'LL HAVE
TO TALK TO
HIM.
I WOULDN'T
WANT TO GET
HIM INTO
TROUBLE.

ERR... WELL,
NOW YOU
MENTION IT...

...LYLE, WHEN YOU TAKE
JACK TO THE PROPS
TRAILER, TAKE HIM VIA
GREG's TENT. INTRODUCE
THEM. OH, AND JACK...
GET GREG TO TELL YOU
ABOUT SOME OF THE
GIRLS HE'S HAD BE-
CAUSE OF HIS
BLUE SKIN.

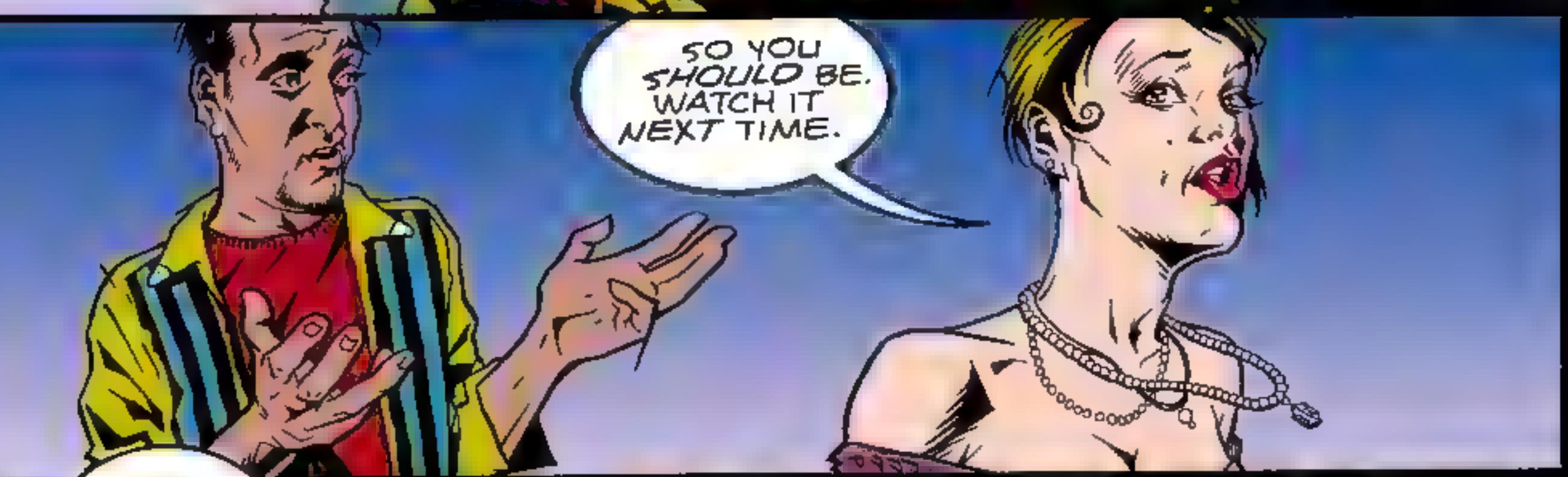
THE
LADIES
LIKE IT, I
GUESS.

OH, NO.
NOTHING
LIKE THAT. JUST
A WORD. AND
TO PUT YOUR
MIND AT REST...

WHEN YOU'VE SEEN
THE OLD STUFF, I'LL
TALK TO YOU ABOUT A
PRICE. WE CAN
HAGGLE.

MY
FAVORITE
SPORT.

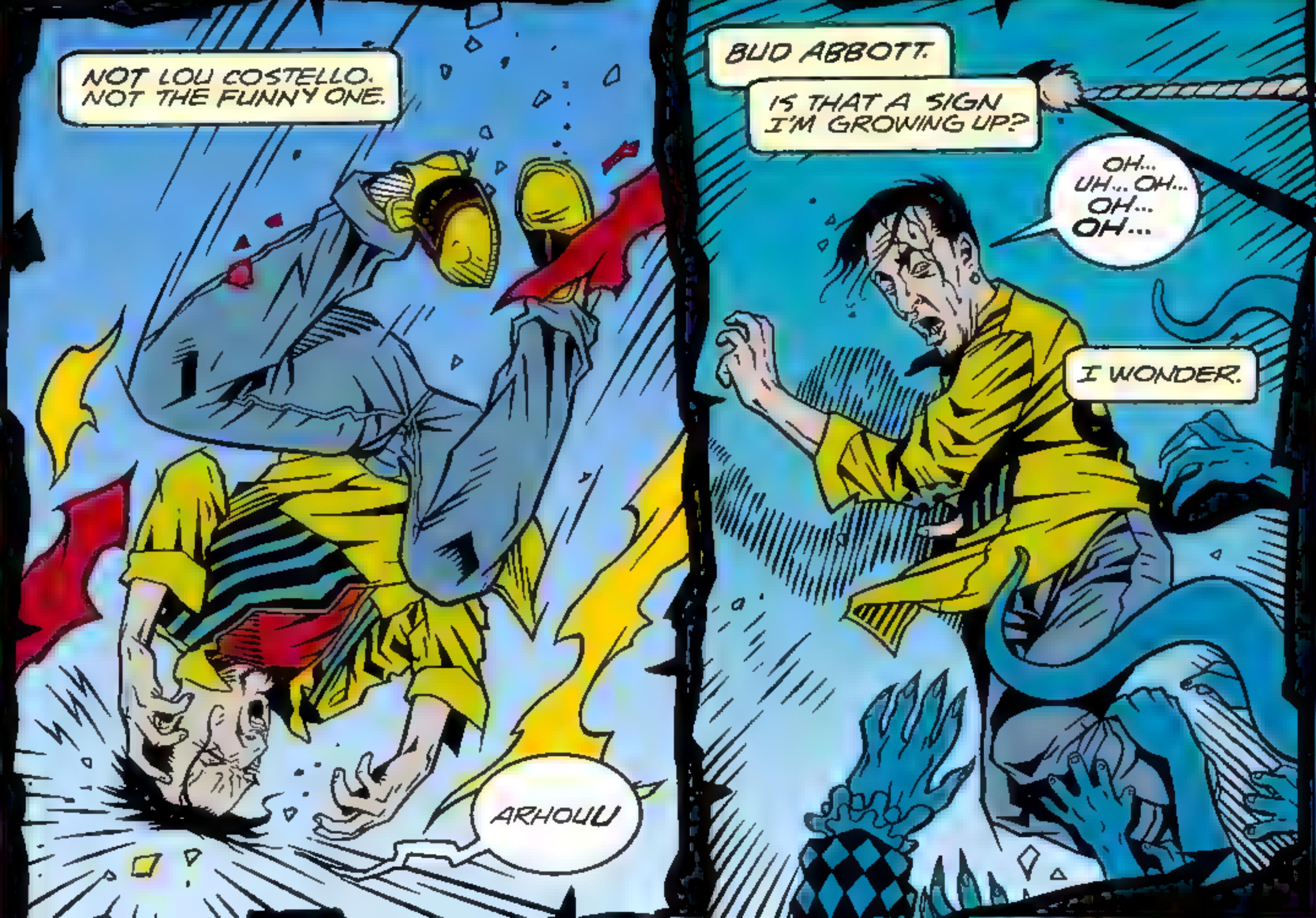
NO ONE ELSE
DOES AS WELL.
NOT EVEN THE
ACROBATS.



NO.







I USED TO THINK Maturity
WAS ACTUALLY ENJOYING
THE LULLS IN MARX BROTHERS
FILMS WHEN HARPO DID HIS
HARP SOLO.

MAYBE I'VE
JUST FOUND
A NEW--

...MY!

CRUSH!

...MY!

OH, MY...

S

COULD'A' DIED
THEN.

I'M THINK-
ING JUNK.
NOT WHAT
I SHOULD
BE...

NOT.

I THINK...

THE BEST
THING TO
DO. NOW.

GET
AWAY.

AWAY.

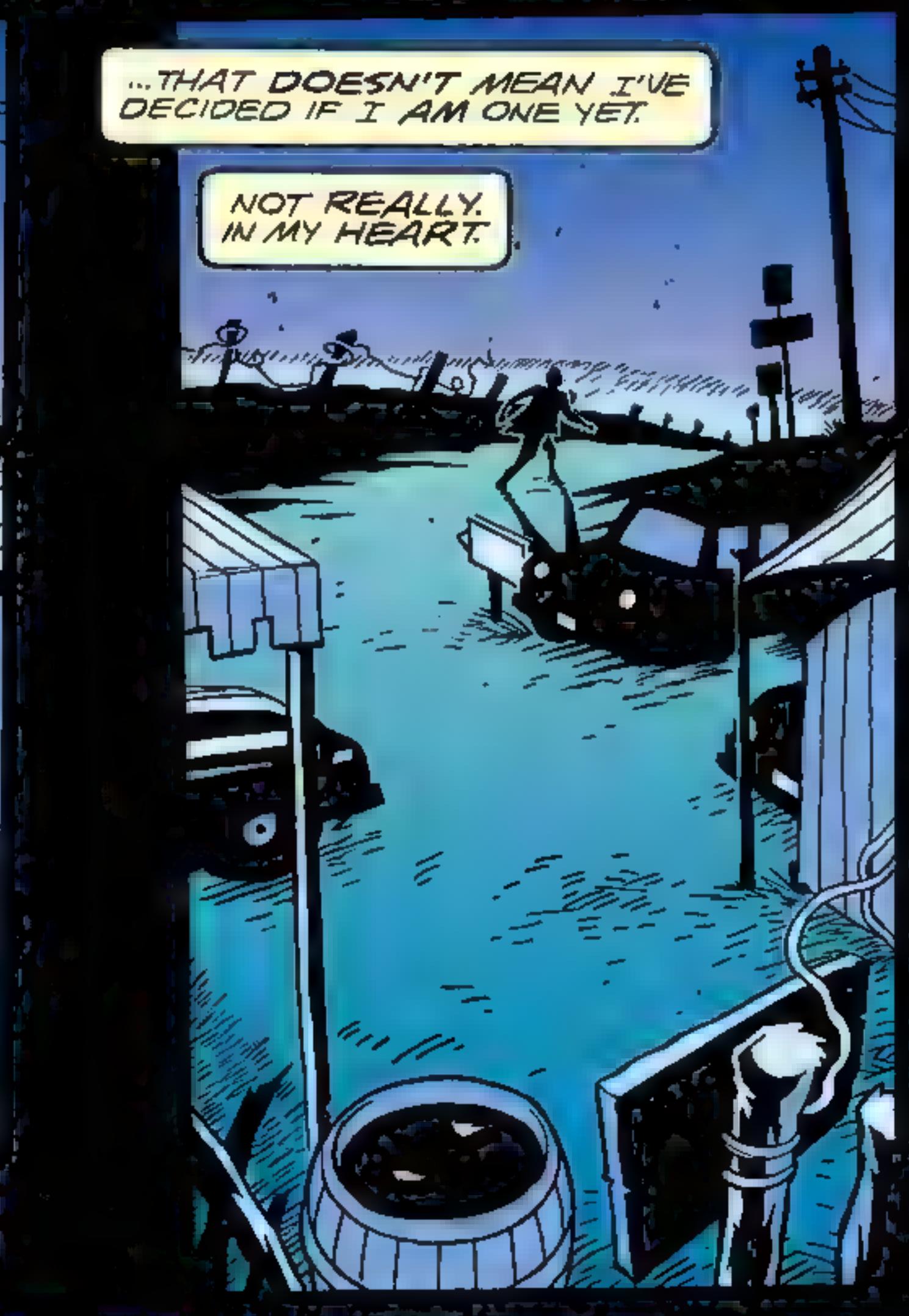
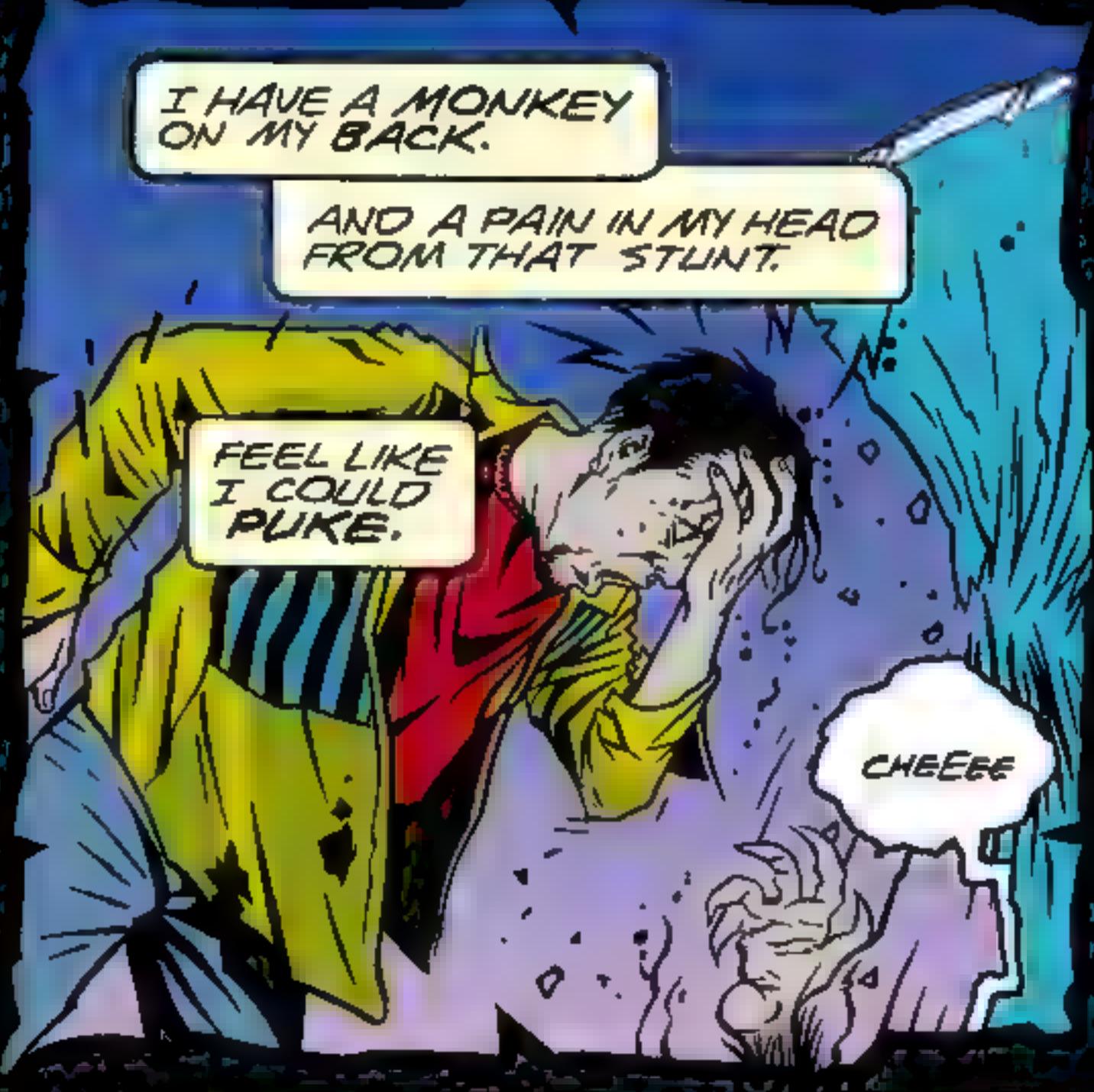
AHHHH

CHEEECHEE

ARHHHH

GATHER MY
THOUGHTS.

DECIDE WHAT
TO DO NE--



I...

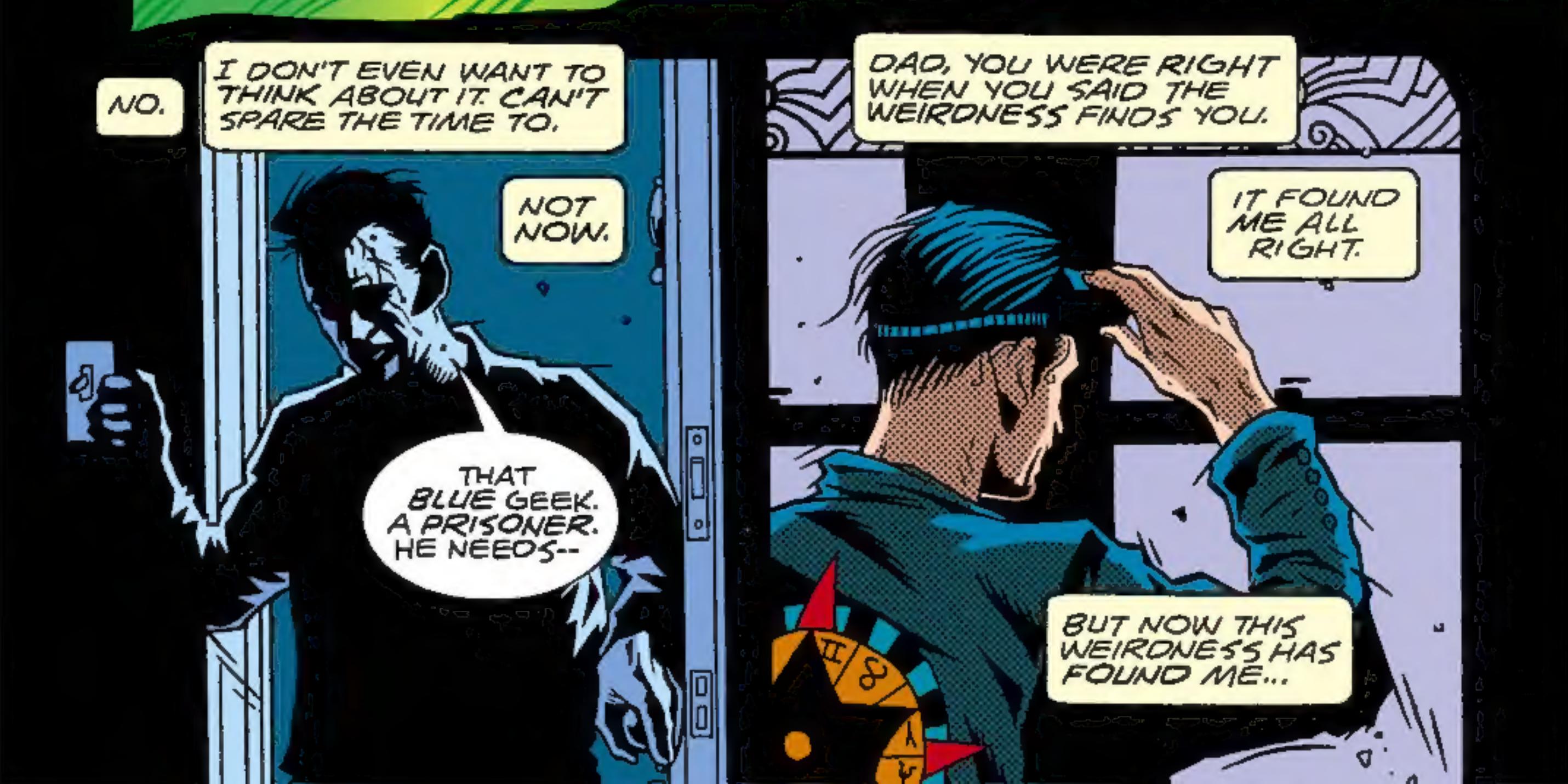
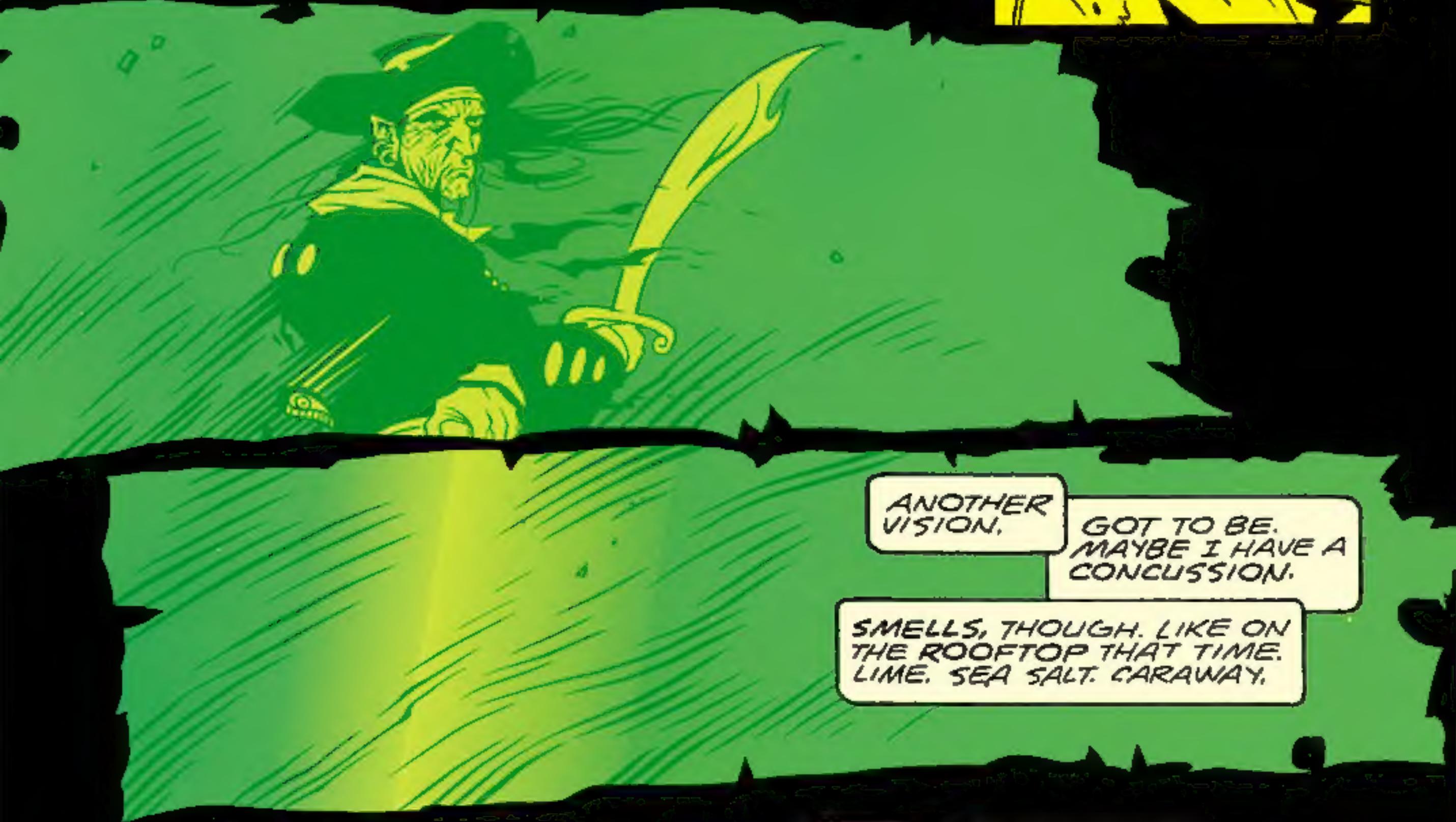
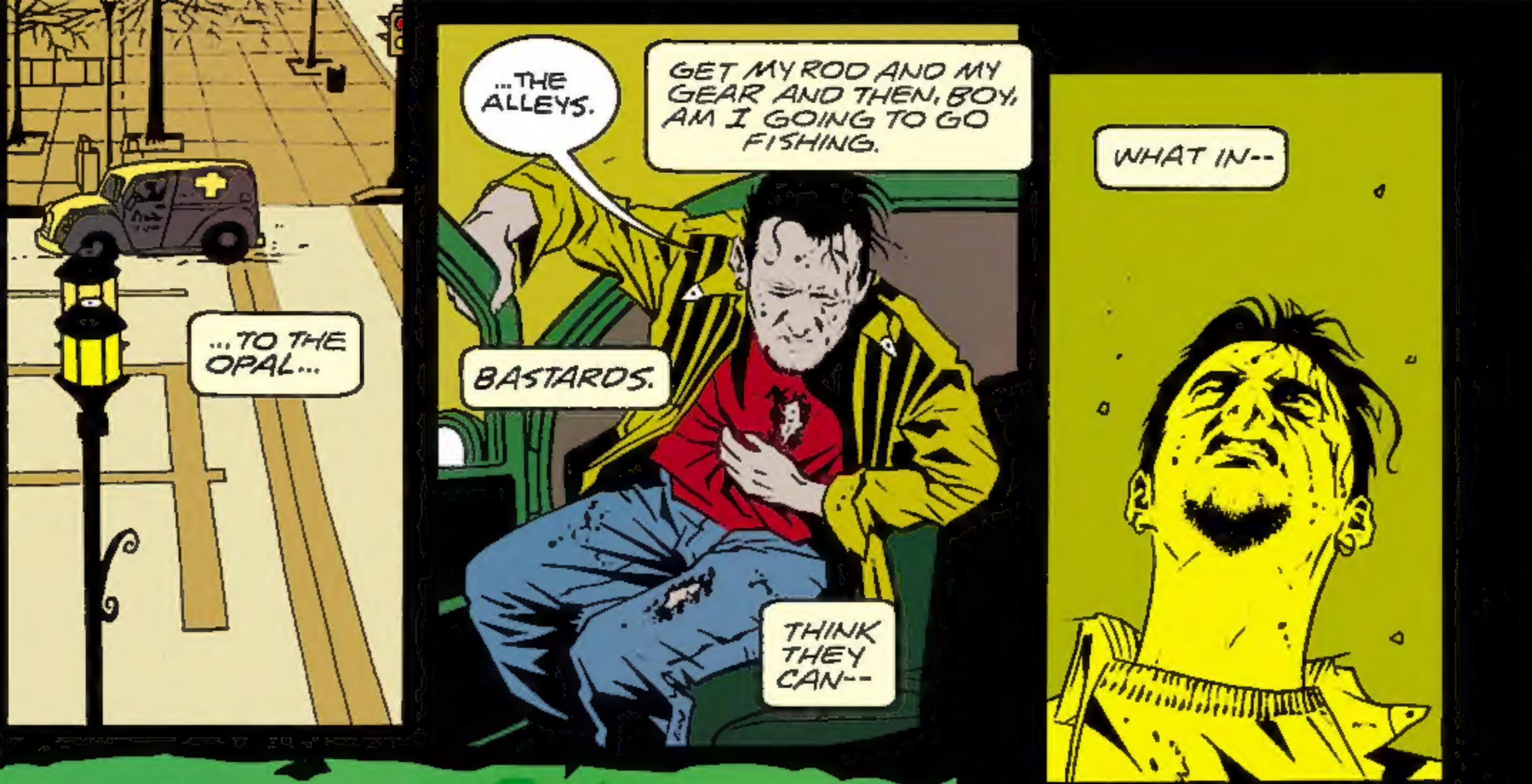
...I... HAVE TO GET
TO MY VAN... GET
TO... GET BACK
TO THE OPAL.

BASTARDOS.

HAVE
TO.

BACK...





A(K) NIGHT AT THE CIRCUS

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...IT'S
GOING TO
WISH IT'D
NEVER MET
ME!

• TO BE CONTINUED •

Deadman Wade

"THIS IS WHAT
AWESOME
LOOKS LIKE!"

DCP